



Press Release

**Congressman John Conyers, Jr.
Michigan, 14th District**



**Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

www.house.gov/judiciary_democrats/index.html

For Immediate Release:
July 22, 2005

Contact: Dena Graziano
202-226-6888

CONYERS ISSUES DOWNING STREET/ROVEGATE TIMELINE:

LAST THROES OF CREDIBILITY -- FIVE YEARS OF LIES AND DECEPTION

In connection with his investigation of the Downing Street Minutes, Rovegate, and the ongoing deception in Iraq, Representative John Conyers issued an interim timeline covering relevant events before and after the invasion of Iraq. As of July 22, 2005, the Chronology is 36 pages long and contains 163 entries.

Conyers stated: "A review of this timeline points in the direction of the following: First, the Bush Administration appears to have been bent on going to War in Iraq well before they announced their formal intentions to do so. Second, the Administration misled the nation on numerous occasions regarding Iraq Intelligence, not just about WMD in general, but about specific findings that have been proven to be false, and appear spurious when given. Third, the Bush Administration is engaged in an ongoing effort to spin and manipulate critical facts regarding our intelligence and the War. Fourth, the Administration has shown a clear pattern of using its official resources to exact revenge and retribution on its critics and whistleblowers. This timeline makes it clear that we must complete our investigation to bring the full facts of these deceptions--which go to the heart of our system of government--to the American people."

A brief summary of these conclusions follows, and the full 36 page chronology is attached:

I. The Administration Was Bent on Going to War with Iraq well before the Invasion

There are at least 38 entries which demonstrate the Administration's fixation on war with Iraq before the invasion in March 2003. These include the following:

- January 30, 2001: Former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill observes that from this time period onward "there was a conviction that Saddam Hussein was a bad person and that he needed to go. **It was all about finding a way to do it. That was the tone of it. The president saying, 'Go find me a way to do this.'**"
- March 5, 2001: A Pentagon Document titled, "Foreign Suitors For Iraqi Oilfield Contracts" was circulated at this time. The document outlines areas of oil exploration and includes a table listing 30 countries and various companies which have interests in Iraq's oil industry.
- September 11, 2001: General Wesley Clark observes that, "There was a concerted effort during the fall of 2001, starting immediately after 9/11, **to pin 9/11 and the terrorism problem on Saddam Hussein. Well, it came from the White House, it came from all over.**"
- November 21, 2001: President Bush asks Donald Rumsfeld, "What have you got in terms of plans for Iraq? **What is the status of the war plan? I want you to get on it. I want you to keep it secret.**"
- February 2002: Senator Bob Graham (D) said he was told by a military commander, "Senator, we have stopped fighting the war on terror in Afghanistan. **We are moving**

military and intelligence personnel and resources out of Afghanistan to get ready for a future war in Iraq.”

- July 23, 2002: The Downing Street Minutes state, “It seemed clear that **Bush had made up his mind to take military action**, even if the timing was not yet decided.”¹

II. Misleading the Nation About Iraq Intelligence

There are at least 18 entries which demonstrate the Administration’s damaging miscalculations on intelligence. These include the following:

- January 28, 2003: President Bush pronounces the following famous 16 words in his State of the Union Address: “the British government has learned that **Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.**” On October 6, 2002, the CIA sent a memo warning the White House that there is little evidence behind the Africa-uranium claim. The memo also noted that the alleged purchase “was not particularly significant.”
- March 18, 2003: In an Address to the Nation, President Bush states, “Intelligence gathered by this and other governments **leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised.**” The Administration gets the intelligence wrong and in fact, no weapons have been found to date. In September 2002, the Defense Intelligence Agency released part of a classified report that said, “There is no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons, or where Iraq has—or will—establish its chemical warfare agent production facilities.”
- March 30, 2003: Donald Rumsfeld pinpoints the location of WMD in an ABC interview. “**We know where they [the weapons] are. They’re in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south and north somewhat.**” In October 3, 2003, David Kay, CIA official responsible for the search for WMD, releases an interim report stating that weapons of mass destruction have not been found.²

III. The Administration’s Ongoing Manipulation of Intelligence and the War

There are at least 14 entries which demonstrate the Administration’s manipulation of intelligence and the true costs and length of the war. These include the following:

- July 23, 2002: The Downing Street Minutes state that the U.S. “case [for war] was thin . . . [b]ut the **intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.**”
- October 10, 2002: Vincent Cannistraro, the CIA’s former head of counter-intelligence said, “Basically, **cooked information is working its way into high-level pronouncements** and there’s a lot of unhappiness about it in intelligence, especially among analysts at the CIA.”
- January 24, 2003: Four days before President Bush delivered his State of the Union address presenting the case for war against Iraq, the National Security Council staff **put out a call for new intelligence to bolster claims that Saddam Hussein possessed nuclear, chemical and biological weapons or programs because "the NSC believed the nuclear case was weak."**
- April 12, 2003: Releasing its five-minute film to the networks, the Pentagon claimed that Rescued POW Jessica Lynch had stab and bullet wounds, and that she had been slapped about on her hospital bed and interrogated. In fact, her Iraqi guards had long fled, she was being well cared for and doctors had already tried to free her.

¹See also entries for May-July 1999; Dec. 16, 2000; January 20, 2001-June 2001; February 2001; September 11, 2001; September 12, 2001; September 17, 2001; September 20, 2001; both entries for February 13, 2002; both entries for March 2002; March 14, 2002; March 18, 2002; March 22, 2002; March 25, 2002; Late March 2002; April 7, 2002; April 28, 2002; June 2002-March 2003; July 2002; July 8, 2002; both entries for July 21, 2002; August 2002; September 5, 2002; September 18, 2002; September 26, 2002; November 6, 2002; December 21, 2002; January 24, 2003; and January 31, 2003.

²See also entries January 9, 2002; October 7, 2002; December 2, 2002; December 7, 2002; February 5, 2003; March 16, 2003; March 21, 2003; April 10, 2003; May 4, 2003; July 9, 2003; July 17, 2003; October 3, 2003; March 31, 2005; June 16, 2005.

- On May 1, 2003, President Bush lands aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln and standing beneath a massive banner reading "Mission Accomplished," he states, "In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed," and "**Major combat operations in Iraq have ended.**"
- September 16, 2003: White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan states that **Wilson's charges of Karl Rove's involvement in the Plame Leak are "totally ridiculous."**
- June 20, 2005: Vice President Cheney says, on a CNN interview, "The level of activity that we see today from a military standpoint, I think, will clearly decline. I think they're in **the last throes, if you will, of the insurgency.**"³

IV. Retaliation and Punishment

There are at least 7 entries which demonstrate the Administration's engagement in harsh retaliation tactics when it is confronted with the slightest criticism or inconvenient facts:

- February 25, 2003: Former General Eric Shinseki told Congress the Defense Department's troop estimate for occupying Iraq was too low. He said that "several hundred thousand troops" would be needed. Rumsfeld responded that Shinseki's comments were "wildly off the mark." Rumsfeld then named Shinseki's successor one year before the end of his term, making the general a lame duck commander.
- July 14, 2003: When Ambassador Joe Wilson told the truth about the Administration's misleading claims about Iraq, Niger, and uranium, the Bush Administration did not respond with facts. Instead, they publicly disclosed that Ambassador Wilson's wife was a deep-cover CIA agent. Leaking her identity was in apparent retaliation for her husband Ambassador Joseph Wilson's *New York Times* op-ed detailing Bush's fraudulent claims about Iraqi efforts to obtain uranium in Niger.
- January 13, 2004: Former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill releases his book, "The Price of Loyalty," where he charges that plans for going to war by the Administration in Iraq were discussed in the earliest days of Bush's presidency. A formal investigation is immediately launched in an attempt to charge O'Neill with wrongdoing in the use of classified documents. O'Neill is subsequently cleared of any wrongdoing.
- March 21, 2004: Richard Clarke (a 30 year civil servant whose career spanned Republican and Democratic administrations) releases his book, "Against All Enemies," in which he asserts that the Bush Administration was overly fixated on Saddam Hussein and Iraq. A propaganda campaign is subsequently launched in an attempt to retaliate and discredit him. Mr. Clarke is accused of "profiteering" and "perjury." Vice President Dick Cheney states, "[Clarke] was moved out of the counterterrorism business over to the cybersecurity side of things" and "Well, [Clarke] wasn't in the loop, frankly, on a lot of this stuff..."⁴

³See also entries for November 15, 2002; December 21, 2002; February 27, 2003; June 1, 2003; August 8, 2003; October 7, 2003; October 10, 2003; July 19, 2005.

⁴ See also entries for January 20, 2001- June 2001; June 2003; January 2004